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Common Ground

Health Food Now

Cyber addiction
vs natural play

10 reasons for BC-STV

Journalism for a change

Healthy side effects
of the recession

Nutrition
on the go





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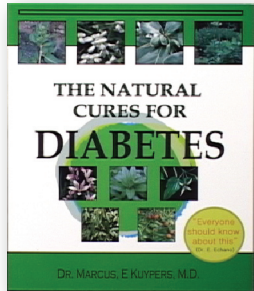
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Do You Know?

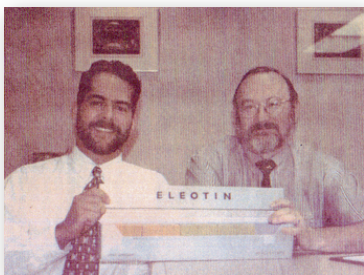
**"MANY PHARMACEUTICAL DRUGS WORSEN DIABETES,
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"Natural Cures for Diabetes" (Authored by Dr. M. Kuypers, 91 pages)

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From the moment this 91 paged book was first published by Human Love Publishing Co. in 2005, it began to draw keen attention of many diabetes experts and doctors around the world, as well as their patients. The book has been translated and published in China, Korea, Japan, US, and Australia since then. Researchers at the University of Calgary, among other universities, declared that "P-700, which is the natural treatment recommended in the book is not just a symptomatic treatment, but a 'cure' for Type II diabetes, and it restores normalcy for 70% of patients."

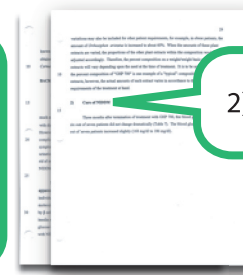


University of Calgary officials (UTI)



A U of C treatment helps most Type II diabetics.

"This remedy will restore near normalcy for 70% of Type II diabetics."



2) Cure of NIDDM

University of Calgary document about P-700

National Diabetic Associations and Pharmaceutical Associations of various countries declared that P700 is **an ideal cure** (Chinese Nanjing Diabetes Associations)" and that **"This cures more than 70% of patients** (Korean Diabetes Association and Pharmacists Associations)."

Many medical doctors around the world are using the P700 treatment on themselves, as well as, recommending this natural treatment to their patients and publishing scientific studies on their findings.

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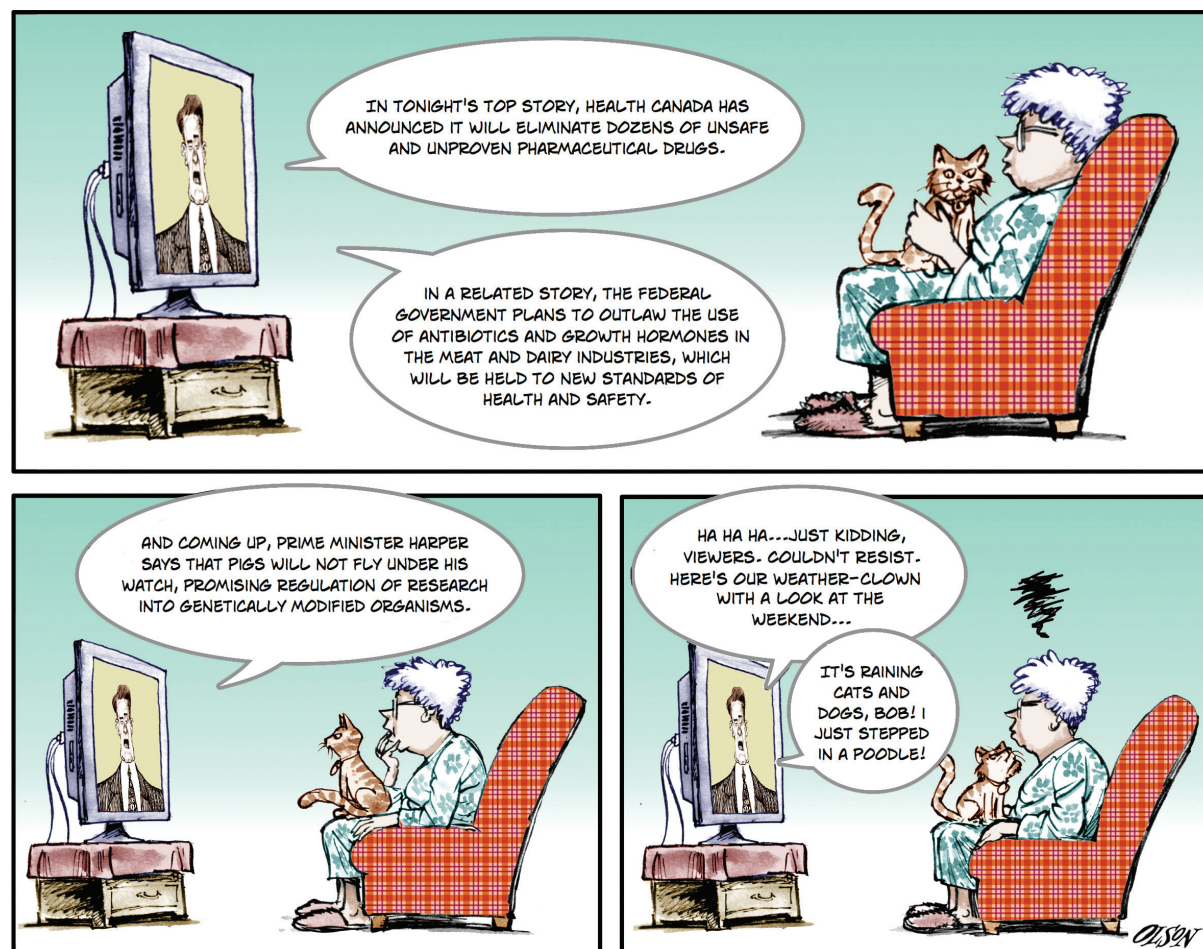
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FEATURES

Healthier pill popping..... 6
 Alan Cassels

Saying yes to change..... 16
 Joan Borysenko and Gordon Dveirin

Intention heals 18
 Adam Dreamhealer

The rebellion of the tools..... 22
 Geoff Olson

You, me and STV 24

IN EVERY ISSUE

HEALTH
Nutrition on the go..... 9
 NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina

ORGANICS
Precious water..... 13
 ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot

SPIRITUALITY
The way of the cross..... 14
 POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

The might of ego's right..... 15
 UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

ENVIRONMENT
Ten reasons for STV 20
 EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

Forests part of climate puzzle 21
 SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki

CULTURE
Framing the Earth..... 34
 FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

Let's re-imagine journalism..... 35
 INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

Perspectives..... 35
 THIRTY SOMETHING Ishi Dinim

LETTERS..... 10
HEALTHY CHOICES 12
RESOURCE DIRECTORY 27
DATEBOOK 36
CLASSIFIED 37
ON TRACK ZODIAC 38





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Healthier pill popping

a positive side effect
of the recession

DRUG BUST Alan Cassels

SURELY OUR economic calamity couldn't have any positive health effects, could it?

As people lose their jobs and watch their assets, retirement savings and homes diminish in value, one might assume that it inevitably means a big negative on the balance sheets of our lives.

Not so fast, I say. Among the pharmaceutical-popping public, recessionary times may indeed have a silver lining. In fact, this recession may be good for both our health and our pocketbooks, especially if it forces us to reassess our frequently thoughtless, overzealous and often un-economical, legal drug habit.

You have to admit that we have been somewhat conditioned by the media to believe that spending less on health-

is unnecessary or harmful. After all, what better time to eliminate fat than when we are collectively facing lean times?

One clue that there is perhaps too much excess in the world of prescription drugs might be found in the way society pays for pharmaceuticals. In Canada, drug coverage operates by the rule of thirds: about a third of our collective pharmaceutical tab is covered by the public purse (in our case, BC Pharmacare). A third is paid for by your private and typically employer-sponsored health benefit program. And finally, a third is paid for out of your own pocket.

Since you, the employee, are essentially paying for the private drug plan,

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Among the pharmaceutical-popping public, recessionary times may indeed have a silver lining. In fact, this recession may be good for both our health and our pocketbooks, especially if it forces us to reassess our frequently thoughtless, overzealous and often un-economical, legal drug habit.
.....

care means rationing, longer waits and less access to health services. But can throwing less money at the pharmaceutical industry translate into better access and shorter wait times for things that actually count? It could, but I admit such heretical thoughts are based on my perspective that pharmaceuticals really do reside in a *special* place inside the healthcare world.

For each drug on the market that is truly lifesaving, providing profound benefits and extending the quality and length of our lives, dozens more either don't deliver the goods or worse, provide the opposite – more harm than benefit. And the money we're spending on those treatments could be buying *less* health.

Suffice to say, one of the side effects of these belt-tightening times could be that we spend more energy figuring out what is really essential for people who are truly sick and then making sure the system doesn't reward prescribing what

let's conclude that two-thirds of all prescription drug spending is essentially coming from your bank account. Yet unlike visits to a doctor or an occasional surgical visit or your trips to the hospital that are 100 percent paid for by the government, the way we pay for drugs makes them *seem* discretionary. After all, if they were really essential the government would pay for them, right?

This might seem simplistic, but addressing the question of whether or not we can afford things should start with us asking whether or not we need them in the first place. Deciding whether or not to fill your prescription shouldn't depend on how much is in your wallet, but you should always ask the big questions: "Why am I taking this drug in the first place? Is this really necessary?"

There is considerable evidence that discretionary, prescription drug taking is widespread; far too many borderline hypertensive patients are prescribed

HEALTH

the latest-greatest pill for their blood pressure. Far too many people worried about high cholesterol take statin drugs, even when those drugs make almost no difference to the quality and length of their lives. And far too many seniors are drugged silly by over-energetic nurses preaching "compliance." Name any major class of drugs today and you'll find gross examples of those products being overused in otherwise healthy people – hence a lot of spending for drugs of no impact, at great financial cost to ourselves and our health system.

So with an economy going into the tank, what should we, as individuals, do? How about making ourselves more knowledgeable about what is actually happening when the doctor's pen is poised over the prescription pad?

A sweet new book, *Ten Questions You Must Ask Your Doctor* (Greystone, 2009), written by crack Australian health journalists

Ray Moynihan and Melissa Sweet, succinctly captures the types of questions you need to be armed with when you talk to your doctor. (Disclaimer time: I wrote a book called *Selling Sickness* with Moynihan four years ago and was asked to write the foreword to the Canadian edition of this book, but I have no financial ties to its success.) I said in my foreword that people should never challenge their physicians for sport, but they can become more involved in their own healthcare by asking their doctors some simple questions, such as, "Do I need this test, this screening program or this drug? What's the evidence behind the treatment? Are there potential benefits and harms related to the treatment and what are my treatment options? Are there things I should do on my own to maintain and improve my health?" While this book goes beyond drugs, it

could have easily gone by the slogan "Just say 'know' to drugs."

Books like this help consumers deconstruct what is being offered to them and compel them to seek out better answers to what's on offer. Considering that a new prescription is often accompanied by new side effects, asking your doctor for the safest, most agreeable (for you) and most proven drug – likely cheaper, as well – won't hurt either.

Hard questions about our health should not be placed solely on the shoulders of doctors, but should also be asked of health system officials. Do we need to be offering all healthcare options all the time to everyone? What is most essential and what is least essential? Are there rational ways to provide access in the grey areas? This needs to be part of a larger public debate that

strives to maintain society's overall level of health, albeit on less money.

It's also time to involve the drug companies that are seeing their profits – except maybe profits for anti-anxiety or anti-depressant

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and author of The ABCs of Disease Mongering: An epidemic in 26 Letters.



drugs – decline. Can we help them sustain reasonable markets by negotiating better prices? After all, if people and health systems can't afford what the drug companies are asking for, there's no market. Radical as it might seem, lowering a product's cost to the consumer might actually improve a drug company's bottom line because, at least for some drugs, excessive prices might be preventing people from filling their prescriptions. I call it "Pharmacy Sticker Shock" and who knows how often people say, "Nope, can't afford it?"

But beyond cutting out unnecessary treatments or negotiating drug prices, people taking a prescription drug for perfectly rational reasons will need to ask a few other questions: "Are there generic drugs that can do the same thing? Do I need to be taking the dose I am taking? Can I take the drug on an as-needed basis?" This is especially true for people taking proton pump inhibitors – drugs like Losec, Pantoloc or Pariet for reflux and heartburn. Most patients may do well taking the drug every other day with no impact on their symptom control. Many could even control their symptoms with lower cost, generic or over the counter products too. Basically, you won't know until you ask.

"Can I consider splitting pills?" is another question to ask. Pill splitting is a growing phenomenon based on the "flat pricing" of drugs like cholesterol-lowering statins, whereas the higher dosed drugs cost about *continued p.25...*

Free public lectures

Alan Cassels delivers a series of lectures this month about his book *The ABCs of Disease Mongering: An Epidemic in 26 Letters* at three Fraser Valley Regional Libraries: 1) Apr. 21: Tsawwassen Library (South Delta). 2) Apr. 22: White Rock. 3) Apr. 23: Murrayville (Langley Township). All programs start at 7PM and run to approximately 8:30PM.

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Nutrition on the go

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD

IS YOUR lifestyle such that you often find yourself grabbing something to eat as you rush out the door, eating it on the run or when you've reached your destination? Does a commute to work replace a leisurely time at the breakfast table? Do you attend school and find that your best time to eat something nourishing is after you arrive, perhaps on a morning break? Are you ravenous during your drive home? If you can relate to any of these scenarios, here are some healthy possibilities to keep you nourished:

- Stock up on fresh fruit: bananas, apples, pears and other handheld fruits are the most convenient choice. Keep a container or small plastic bag handy – in your car or backpack – for peels or cores.



- Slap together a sandwich using whole grain bread and nut butter. If you'd like to venture beyond peanut butter, try the following: almond, hazelnut, cashew, sunflower seed butter or sesame tahini. You can also include a sliced banana.

- Check out the varieties of trail mix in local supermarkets. Better yet, create your own by adding to an existing mix or combining your favourite nuts, seeds and dried fruits. Consider almonds (for calcium), walnuts (for omega-3 fatty acids), cashews (for zinc) and pecans and hazelnuts (for vitamin E). Add pumpkin or sunflower seeds as they provide plenty of trace minerals, vitamins and protein. Dried apricots, currants and raisins add iron. Dried mango contains vitamin C, even after drying.

- Take along a single portion of instant oatmeal to eat when you arrive at work. Look for the kind that is sold in the container that doubles as a bowl. You can also add dried fruit or nuts. Cereals are good with apple juice; keep shelf stable portion packs of apple juice, Rice Dream, or fortified soymilk on-hand.

- Take along fruited soy yogurt. If you prefer, include a little plastic bag of granola for a fibre-rich topping.

- Slice some carrots, celery, cucumbers, bell peppers, etc., and place them in totable food containers or plastic baggies; for protein, buy the small tubs (about 1 cup or 227 g) of hummus, available in numerous flavours.

- For a high protein, low fat item to eat when you reach your destination and you have access to a kettle, stock up on instant (just-add-hot-water) bean, pea or lentil soups in the tub-shaped, single serving cardboard containers. This is a satisfying snack and you'll discover that there's quite a variety in the supermarkets.

- Pack leftovers from supper in a small container so they'll be ready to transport.

Tip: Keep napkins and clean, plastic, reusable plates, cups, forks, spoons and knives in your car, backpack or desk drawer so you can feast on things from the market when you're on the go or at work. You'll find space-saving items in outdoor equipment stores.

You may be surprised how easy it is to find healthful, vegetarian items in ordinary stores and other locations. Here are some possibilities:

Traditional supermarkets: Bananas and other fruits (if you have access to a sink to wash them), trail mix, pre-packaged baby carrots and hummus, prepared platters of bite sized veggies, whole grain cereals, salad bars, deli items, nuts, seeds and dried fruits.

Health oriented bakeries, delis, and natural foods stores: If you are close to a good bakery, deli or health food store, check out the whole grain rolls, breads and muffins. Other convenient foods include smoothies, juices, deli items, salads and salad bars, ready-made soups, fresh fruits and vegetables, soy yogurt, fortified soy and rice beverages and fruit-nut bars.

For those travelling farther afield: At airports you can find bananas, washed fruit, bagels with peanut butter, granola bars, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, cereal, fruit juice, vegetarian nori rolls and bean tortillas. Our local YVR even has a juice bar among its fast food outlets. You can find a listing and review of veggie items at American airports at http://www.pcrm.org/health/reports/Airport_Food_Review_06.html

Vesanto Melina is a local dietitian and co-author of nutrition classics including Becoming Vegetarian, Becoming Vegan, the Food Allergy Survival Guide and the new Raw Food Revolution Diet.
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Letters

Mainstream media finally reporting the truth about cell phones

Recently, the news media has reported on a Swedish study, which showed a five-fold increase in malignant brain tumours among young people who used a cell phone for at least a year before the age of 20. This study was included in the peer-reviewed journal, **Pathophysiology*, along with 15 other studies from researchers in six different countries, which all showed cause for concern. As in the past, Health Canada reaffirmed its position that it "currently sees no scientific reason to consider the use of cell phones as unsafe. There is no convincing evidence of increased risk of disease from exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic fields from cell phones."

This is hard to fathom, as all of the independent studies tracking those who used cell phones for over 10 years show increased risk – all of them. Health Canada was also privy to data from the six-year, \$28.5 million research program by the North American wireless industry, which showed single and double strand DNA breakage and damage to cell nuclei from cell phone use way back in 1999.

With millions of Canadians using cell phones, and with parents providing their children phones for "safety," Health Canada has a duty to take action to protect all of us. It took decades for [Health Canada] to raise the alarm about tobacco. Children and parents can't afford to wait decades for warnings about products from an industry that uses the tobacco [industry's] public relations playbook.

– Milt Bowling, president and CEO of
the non-profit Clean Energy Foundation

(*L.Hardell, et al., Epidemiological evidence for an association between use of wire less phones and tumor diseases, *Pathophysiology*(2009),doi:10.1016/j.pathophys.2009.01.003)

Common Ground the first to report cell phone hazards

I was thrilled to see a full-page photo, with headlines linking brain tumours to teen cell phone use, on the cover of *The Province* on March 16. Finally, mainstream media is also reporting on the hazards of cell phone use. This is cause for celebration.

Many of us are overwhelmed with information coming at us from all directions, most of it contradictory. My son exclaimed recently, "Everything seems bad for you." He is not alone with this thought. It takes multiple exposures to the truth for a message to take effect and it is so much more effective if relayed by those with significant public standing or respect.

Hats off to *Common Ground* magazine for being the forerunner in its bang-

on reporting of many pertinent issues, with articles about PharmaCare's drug addiction bankrupting public health to *Twin Towers of Deception* [September 2006] to *Make Water a Human Right* [March 2007]. Regarding cell phones, I remember reading the article *Cell phones: Invisible Hazards of the Wireless Age* in *CG's* December 2006 issue (almost two and a half years ago!). That was an eye opener for me. I had just bought almost everyone in my family, including the young ones, a cell phone.

I want to congratulate *Common Ground* magazine for being the first here to alert us about the safety of cell phone use. *CG* has the wisdom, foresight and courage to lead with educating the public on areas sometimes taboo and contrary to the "official" message out there.

I have been reading *CG* magazine now for many years and I conclude that *CG* feels not only passionate, but



it comes from the place of kindness and soul. Lastly, this issue of cell phones (and cordless phones, wireless internet and cell towers) is fixable with currently available knowledge. May our health concerns triumph over short-term corporate profits. May our eyes remain open, kindly and soulfully.

– Bebe Law, Burnaby

Bernie made off with billions

I always enjoy your very lucid and insightful writing, Mr. Olson. Our family lost \$3 million with Bernie. Yah, I'm angry with him, a fellow "Yid" – non-pejorative when pronounced in the Old Yiddish as "Yeed" – who just mowed ahead as if the bulimic frenzy could never end. But, as my brother says, to the mostly non-Jewish public (and capitalist class) this is just a bunch of Jews eating each other up. Is he psychopathic? Dr. Michael Parenti says it best: "Is it the outcome of the personal avarice of people like Bernard Madoff? In other words, is the problem systemic or individual? In fact, the two are not mutually exclusive.

Capitalism breeds the venal perpetrators and rewards the most unscrupulous among them. The crimes and crises are not irrational departures from a rational system, but the converse: they are the rational outcomes of a basically irrational and amoral system. (Capitalism's Self-inflicted Apocalypse by Dr. Michael Parenti, <http://michaelparenti.org/capitalism/apocalypse.html>)

Starting in the early 70s, my father started investing with a friend, who invested with another broker, who invested with Madoff. We knew there was this guy on the New York Stock Exchange who was supposedly doing arbitrage with our money. We were enthralled with getting 12 percent per year. But we were never permitted to know who the guy was. On December 7, 2008, we found out in the media, confirmed by a letter from our friend, who also didn't know who Madoff was until then.

For years, I was able to give money to the campaigns to help free Leonard Peltier, Lori Berenson and the prison abolition movement – ironically, victims of the same system that produced Madoff. That charity can't happen as liberally any more.

Our family is lucky. We had enough diversification to still be comfortable – just through luck and privilege rather than being smart. This cliché about being a smart investor is ruthlessly guilt-laden and blames victims for getting poor, in keeping with our dominant ideology. For instance, the *New York Times* reported that, in the weeks before Madoff's collapse, two other giant funds removed at least hundreds of millions to a few billion from Madoff. That left nothing for anybody else – ending the Ponzi scheme. Others with more power knew something the relative peons weren't privy to. And it urges us to ask the question: What is it about our system that leads to this anyway.

All the money in stocks, bonds and their equally socially useless derivatives comes from unpaid labour somewhere in the world, accumulated by the few over weeks to centuries. For an engineer, a teacher, an apple picker and a toilet cleaning person – anybody working more than two days a week (the amount of time it takes to meet our basic needs) – is creating unpaid surplus value for the accumulating class. Less than five percent of the global population has amassed more than 60 percent of all the wealth by this centuries-long process. Madoff was small fry in this global dynamic. Focussing on him diverts us from the real issue. Let's work together to put people before profits in all aspects of life.

– Larry Wartel, Victoria, BC

continued p.26...

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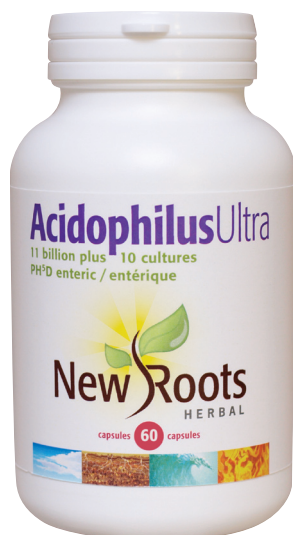
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Precious water

ON THE GARDEN PATH Carolyn Herriot



RENOWNED FOR its lakes, rivers and streams, Canada has nine percent of the world's available supply of fresh water so it's hard to believe that Canadians should be concerned about fresh water shortages. You might think commercial and industrial demands put the most strain on the water supply, but Canadian households actually use 60 percent of all the water (second in per capita use only to Americans).

Residential use, including flushing toilets and watering lawns, is the fastest growing sector of water usage across Canada. On average, BC residents use 440L (96 gal) of water per day, but at least half of this is wasted, in some part, due to leaking faucets, high flush toilets and excessive outdoor water use, especially in summer when our water usage more than doubles. Imagine nine billion bathtubs full of water because that's the amount of water wasted each year in Canada.

When we over-water lawns, wash down the driveway or leave the hose running, we are wasting a precious resource that one day may be in short supply. Over-watering the lawn is the most wasteful practice, as half the water we pour on our lawns is lost to runoff. It takes only one inch of water per week to ensure that roots grow deep enough for the lawn to stay healthy during periods of hot weather. To measure this, check how long your system takes to fill a tin can to a depth of one inch. That's how long you should water your lawn once a week.

Most gardeners don't realize that the most commonly available plants require no more water than Mother Nature supplies and many plants are watered unnec-

ORGANICS

essarily. All plants need regular watering from the time they are planted until they are well rooted, so there is no such thing as a drought tolerant plant until it is well established. Most plants require only one growing season to establish; trees and shrubs can take two or more seasons. Once established, plants can be weaned off watering to the point where natural rainfall will satisfy their needs.

Did you know?

Mulching on steep slopes, windy sites and between exposed plants reduces evaporation, protects plants and smothers weeds. A mulched border can go seven days between watering. Light sandy soils need more watering than heavy clay soils. Water runs off slopes and berms quickly without soaking in. Terracing helps prevent runoff. Lawns are major consumers of water. One good, deep, weekly watering encourages roots to grow deeper and is better than brief, daily watering, which causes surface roots vulnerable to desiccation. If it's cool at night, water in the morning. Young plants don't enjoy cold, wet soils, which lead to fungal problems, such as damping off. If a plant is seriously wilted, water it regardless of the time of day. An eco-meadow of yarrow, speedwell, clover or English daisy needs very little water and no fertilization and looks beautiful in bloom. Best yet, it only needs mowing once every four weeks.

Carolyn Herriot is author of A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide.

www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath

Watering tips

When watering, avoid excessive water loss from evaporation by watering in the early morning, ideally before 9:00 AM. Avoiding windy days prevents wastage due to wind drift. Add organic amendments to the soil to increase its water holding capacity. Mulching garden beds with compost, leaves and manure locks in moisture for drier periods. A brown lawn, which recovers in winter, is a small price to pay to protect such a precious resource. With increasing populations and decreasing supplies, using fresh water sparingly and with greater respect now ensures there will be plenty left for others to enjoy in future.

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The way of the cross

THE POWER OF NOW Eckhart Tolle

THERE ARE many accounts of people who say they have found God through their deep suffering, and there is the Christian expression "the way of the cross," which I suppose points to the same thing. We are concerned with nothing else here.

Strictly speaking, they did not find God through their suffering because suffering implies resistance. They found God through surrender, through total acceptance of what is, into which they were forced by their intense suffering. They must have realized, on some level, that their pain was self-created.

How do you equate surrender with finding God? Since resistance is inseparable from the mind, relinquishment of resistance – surrender – is the end of the mind as your master, the impostor pretending to be "you," the false god. All judgment and all negativity dissolve. The realm of Being, which had been obscured by the mind, then opens up. Suddenly, a great stillness arises within you, an unfathomable sense of peace. And within that peace, there is great joy. And within

At this time, as far as the unconscious majority of humans are concerned, the way of the cross is still the only way. They will only awaken through further suffering, and enlightenment as a collective phenomenon will be predictably preceded by vast upheavals. This process reflects the workings of certain universal laws that govern the growth of consciousness and thus was foreseen by some seers.

It is described, among other places, in the *Book of Revelation* or *Apocalypse*, though cloaked in obscure and sometimes impenetrable symbology. This suffering is inflicted not by God, but by humans on themselves and on each other, as well as by certain defensive measures that the Earth, which is a living, intelligent organism, is going to take to protect herself from the onslaught of human madness.

However, there are a growing number of humans alive today whose consciousness is sufficiently evolved not to need any more suffering before the realization of enlightenment. You may be one of them.

Enlightenment consciously chosen means to relinquish your attachment to past and future and to make the Now the main focus of your life.

that joy, there is love. And at the innermost core, there is the sacred, the immeasurable, That which cannot be named.

I don't call it finding God because how can you find that which was never lost, the very life that you are? The word God is limiting, not only because of thousands of years of misperception and misuse, but also because it implies an entity other than you. God is Being, itself – not a being. There can be no subject-object relationship here, no duality, no you and God. God-realization is the most natural thing there is. The amazing and incomprehensible fact is not that you can become conscious of God, but that you are not conscious of God.

The way of the cross is the old way to enlightenment and, until recently, it was the only way. But don't dismiss it or underestimate its efficacy. It still works.

The way of the cross is a complete reversal. It means that the worst thing in your life, your cross, turns into the best thing that ever happened to you, by forcing you into surrender, into "death," forcing you to become as nothing, to become as God – because God, too, is no-thing.

Enlightenment through suffering – the way of the cross – means to be forced into the kingdom of heaven kicking and screaming. You finally surrender because you can't stand the pain anymore, but the pain could go on for a long time until this happens. Enlightenment consciously chosen means to relinquish your attachment to past and future and to make the Now the main focus of your life. It means choosing to dwell in the state of presence rather than in time. It means saying yes to what is.

You then don't need pain anymore. How much more time do you think you will need before you are able to say, "I will create no more pain, no more suffering"? How much more pain do you need before you can make that choice? If you think that you need more time, you will get more time – and more pain. Time and pain are inseparable.

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The might of ego's right

UNIVERSE WITHIN Gwen Randall-Young

SPIRITUALITY

Let go of your attachment to being right and suddenly your mind is more open. You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment.

—Ralph Marston

BUDDHIST philosophy teaches about the pain and suffering that come from attachment. We may become attached to people, things or events unfolding in a particular way. Ego likes to think it has control and that it can arrange aspects of life to suit its wishes.

Of course, life, events and other people cannot be controlled so ego seemingly gets into a power struggle with what is. At times, it can be like a four-year old who doesn't get his way. Ego, too, has its own version of tantrums.

mental head around issues of gay rights. Whether it argues that homosexuality is immoral or that gays should not be allowed to marry, ego takes its biased view and parades it as fact.

Religious groups that claim their religion is the only right one are yet ego-driven while practising their form of spirituality. Stating that they are the only ones who will be admitted into God's presence is projecting human ego judgments onto the higher spiritual power. Surely, God, of all beings, has evolved beyond playing favourites and controlling through reward and punishment.

I smile inwardly when I hear someone who has "found" the spiritual path talking about how "unevolved" his/her partner, friends or colleagues are. Clearly, ego has found the path, but it is still ego walking down that path. Now it is all things spiritual that are right and everything else is wrong. Ego holds on with a tenacity and

I smile inwardly when I hear someone who has "found" the spiritual path talking about how "unevolved" his/her partner, friends or colleagues are.

Ego often becomes attached to being right. The problem is that it becomes attached to being "right" about things that are often a matter of opinion, rather than fact. If one insists on being right about the score of last night's game or the exact wording of a quote from Shakespeare, these are things that can be objectively confirmed.

However, if the topic is a question of politics or how things should be handled in a relationship or even how the children should be disciplined, there is no one right viewpoint. Try telling that to ego. While there is no arbiter for the validity of its truth, ego argues its points on the basis of some kind of superior knowing.

Yes, indeed, when ego is speaking, it speaks with the voice of authority. It is right and everyone else is wrong. Not only does it claim rightness when there is no right, but it also establishes a polarity, which brings with it distance, conflict and, in extreme cases, violence.

We see the devastating effects when a society decides that one group is better than the others. It can justify its belief in all kinds of ways, but it is still a judgment based on opinion, not fact. We have seen this with the Jews in Germany and the blacks in America.

Ego also rears its polarizing, judg-

fervour that makes it seem like a life and death issue.

In truth, for ego it is a life and death issue. We either continue to house ego within our mind-body, allowing it to govern our thoughts, feelings and behaviours or we let it go. Ego has a very deep fear of getting the transformational pink slip.

If you find yourself asserting that you are right, being unable to let go or simply agree to disagree, it is a sure sign that ego still plays a dominant role in your consciousness. Holding on to rightness is like closing a door to all other points of view. It often allows the argument to become more important than the person with whom we are conversing. It allows no room for expanding perceptions or seeing a bigger picture.

With ego out of the way, so goes the issue of right and wrong. We are then free to respectfully disagree and to learn from one another.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. For more articles, permission to reprint and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca.

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Saying Yes to change

by Joan Borysenko, Ph.D. and Gordon Dveirin

Sometimes you get guidance that you don't understand until much later. My husband Gordon and I woke up one morning a few years ago with an idea that we couldn't shake. We were to write a book about change. That book was published by Hay House two years ago, and it helped us adapt to the sudden change in the economy that has affected our entire family. The wisdom from Saying Yes to Change... continues to inspire me personally in what the media likes to call "turbulent times." I hope you'll enjoy this excerpt from our book.

WE WERE watching the movie *Cast Away* starring Tom Hanks. A friend of Joan's, Jim Curtan, had done an exciting exegesis of the film at a course that she'd attended, and we decided to watch it together from the perspective of change and transformation. *Cast Away* is not only the story of an unexpected

ert island for four years, he's sustained by the antique pocket watch his fiancée gave him for Christmas on the night they parted. The mechanism is ruined when the plane crashes and time stops – both literally and figuratively. *Chronos* has, in fact, become irrelevant in the new dimension he's entered. It's the picture of his lost love, mounted in the top half of the watch that keeps him alive. Several FedEx packages wash ashore with him, and one contains the other source of his salvation, a soccer ball. He paints a face on it with the blood of his wounded hand and names it Wilson, the brand name on the ball. It's this imaginary friend who becomes integral to Hanks' developing compassion.

His four-year sojourn in the ocean wilderness is a time of transition. His old life went down with the plane and he hasn't yet been reborn to a new life. He's in a kind of no man's land, a transitional place, where there's plenty of time to think about the meaning of life. The end

The transitional period when we stand at the threshold of possibility crackles with both danger and opportunity... The opportunity is self-realization.

catastrophic change, but a truly elegant demonstration of a three-part process of transformation that's been described by anthropologists as a rite of passage.

Hanks' character is a hard-driving, clock watching FedEx trainer who metaphorically worships *Chronos*, the god of Time. Tick, tick, tick is his watchword, and nothing is more important than shaving a few minutes off of worldwide delivery times. The relational aspect of Hanks' life is a pale specter in comparison to his endless work as a harried road warrior. There's no time for the woman he loves, he wolfs his food down on the run and he can't even look his colleague – whose wife is dying of cancer – in the eye. He's not a bad guy, just a preoccupied, unconscious one.

Hanks' old life ends abruptly when the FedEx plane carrying him to Malaysia crashes in the South Pacific and he's the only survivor. Marooned on a des-

of his long transition from the man who he was to the man he is becoming nears an end when the metal carcass of the plane's Portapotty finally washes ashore. He builds a raft and uses the metal structure as a sail. The ordeal at sea on the tiny raft is terrifying and the defining moment comes when Wilson washes overboard in the aftermath of a storm. Torn between swimming out to sea to rescue his friend and losing his own life, Hanks chooses life. His grief is almost unbearable, a tribute to the humanity that's been growing inside him during his ordeal on the island. At this point in his journey, magic happens. A whale keeps watch over him, singing mysterious songs of beauty. In the nick of time a ship passes by and rescues him. The Hanks who returns to America, however, is a far different man than the one who left.

On the FedEx plane home – just after his rescue – he looks straight into the



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INSPIRATION

eyes of the man whose wife was dying when he left. With deep humanity, he apologizes that he wasn't there for him. Hanks has become a mensch – a wise and compassionate human being. His fiancée, meanwhile, believing him dead, married and has a child. Their reunion is poignant and while it's clear that she'd give up her marriage to be with him again, he knows that she's found a new life that needs to be honored.

The film ends with a reflective, mature Hanks standing at the intersection of four



Joan Borysenko

dusty country roads, the same place where the film began. It's a deeply symbolic image, both a crossroads and a cross. Father Thomas Keating, a modern Christian contemplative, speaks of the cross as symbolic of two movements in our lives. Its horizontal arm represents the death of our time-bound false self, the ego that developed early in life to keep us safe by conforming to other people's notions of what it means to be human. The vertical arm represents resurrection into the realm of *kairos*, the eternal present in which our true nature resides. Moving from one to the other, from the fearful, time-bound world of *chronos* to the compassionate, timeless world of *kairos* is at the heart of the transformational journey. But what does this mean in practice? How does the shift from one story to another happen?

In rite of passage stories, the protagonist recognizes and embodies his real self in a three-part journey. First, he or she is forced to leave the known world, and all that's been loved. The loss and separation are wrenching, irrevocable. Perhaps you've had that experience. Maybe you lost your job, or had to declare bankruptcy. Maybe you've had a health challenge. When a person is diagnosed with cancer or AIDS, they often say that it feels like the earth has opened up and swallowed them. Noth-

ing is the same as it was just a moment before. They've died to the person they were, and have not been reborn as who they will some day become.

That sudden catapulting from the known into the mystery is the end of the first stage of the transformative process, which is always marked by separation and loss. In the second phase of the journey, the main character enters a transitional state, what Cornell anthropologist Victor Turner, who studied ritual in the Ndembu tribe of Southwest Zambia, called *the liminal phase*. The initiate stands at the *limen*, the *threshold* of something new, but they haven't arrived there yet. The boy who leaves his mother's hut to go into the forest for circumcision is no longer a boy. But he's not yet a man.

This intermediate stage is a place of magic where chaos rules and even the usual constraints of physics may be overcome. Getting through the transitional period of liminality in traditional rites of passage involves facing numerous ordeals. One of the most remarkable aspects of these ordeals is that they can't be faced and overcome in the usual linear manner of the *chronos* world. The initiate must become still, and give up his personal will to attune with the higher wisdom of *kairos*. This is a challenge in its own right because it's contrary to the usual way that the ego functions, using personal will to push forward. The transitional period when we stand at the threshold of possibility crackles with both danger and opportunity. The danger is getting so stressed out that anxiety, depression and despondency take over. The opportunity is self-realization.

The third stage of the rite of passage is return. The Ndembu boy who left his mother's hut in the first phase of his journey usually spends a year or two in the bush. He's no longer a boy during this liminal phase, but he's not yet a man. In his transitional period, he learns from other men what it means to be a warrior and a man of heart. And he also spends time alone, like Hanks in *Cast Away*, learning to know himself. The person who finally returns from the initiation is not the same person who left. The boy has become a man with authentic wisdom to give to his tribe. The journeyer, having found true strength, offers it to the community for the common good. Mythologist Joseph Campbell described this transformational sequence of self-realization as the Hero's Journey.

Adapted from Saying Yes to Change: Essential Wisdom for Your Journey by Joan Borysenko, Ph.D. and Gordon Dveirin, Ed.D. (Hay House, 2006) Joan Borysenko presents the workshop Saying Yes to Change at the Spirit Heals Conference, May 29, 9-12pm and delivers a public keynote, May 29, 7-9:30pm. Register at www.spiritheals.ca/register.htm or call 250-472-4747.



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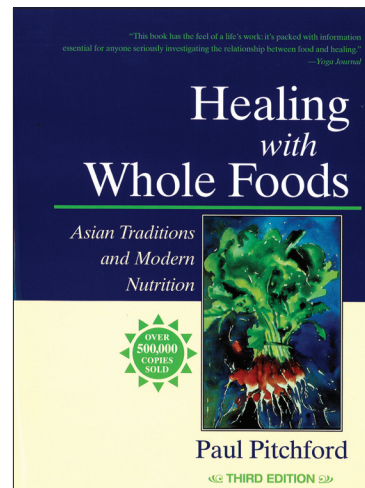
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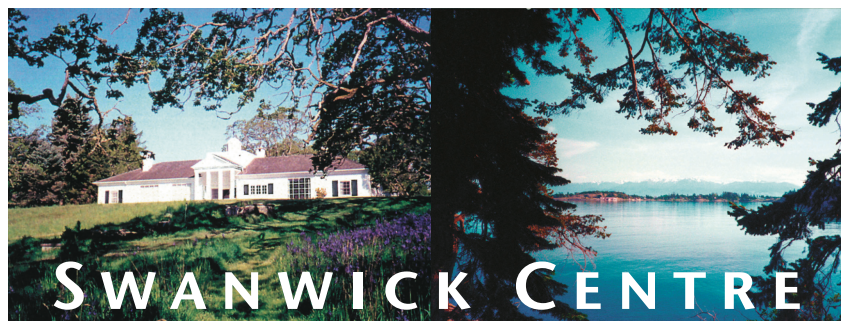
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Intention heals

by Adam DreamHealer

WE HAVE all heard that the power of our positive thinking has a direct influence on our biology. It sounds simple. Many of us accept that this is true as we have all known people who enjoy a more fulfilling life than those with a negative outlook. Although intellectually we may accept the power of positive thinking, few of us know how to effectively maximize its potential.

The latest biological research supports our ability to influence our own reality. Our wellness is directly related to our thoughts, emotions and intentions. Each of us has the capacity to focus our intentions and energy on effectively harnessing this ability when given some guidance. In order to be effective, healing must happen on a physical, emotional and spiritual level.

Throughout our lives, we are constantly balancing and rebalancing our state of well being. Our thoughts and how we choose to perceive them are governed by our intentions. By tapping into this innate resource, you can always improve your health or any aspect of your life.

During my university studies in molecular biology, I have been fascinated by the dynamic nature of all molecules of life. Just the smallest change in structure or orientation of a biochemical has dramatic effects on our health. Metabolism is based on enzyme activity and these enzymes are directly influenced by our

intentions and thoughts. You can now appreciate that there is no such thing as an idle or neutral thought. This should be a huge motivation for you to practise positive thoughts.

Specifically, just how are proteins chemically changed by intention? Every time we think a thought, many chemical reactions occur and every chemical reaction emits light. A thought actually becomes a "light emitter." Our thoughts and intentions are constantly emitting light and this light directly influences all of the biochemicals in our body.

Quantum physics may sound complex, but for most of us, all we need to know about it is that all physical objects

when healing. I feel/see images of interacting, vibrating frequencies connecting to a web or network of frequencies. Everyone has a unique frequency within this web of interconnectivity. I focus to reach a coherent energy frequency by altering mine, in order to get closer to the unique frequency of the person I am healing. This synchronization of frequencies occurs quickly and a more in-tune resonance results in more complete information being exchanged. Using my intentions, I then transfer the information to them so they can manifest positive health changes. This works most effectively if the person's intention for better health is aligned with the healer's intentions.

greatest respect for your own ability to heal yourself and know that visualizations are an effective way to focus your intentions on healing.

Energy medicine is not new. It is ancient wisdom appearing throughout history in every culture. For thousands of years, indigenous cultures have described the energy force of health. Somehow, vital energy was dismissed from the modern scientific model of health because it is not easily measurable or fully understood. Yet there have always been some people who were able to see, feel and know its presence.

The ancient healing ideas and practices of my First Nations or Native American cultural roots have had a very profound influence on my work. I have had the privilege of participating as an invited healer in many sacred healing rituals, which have shaped my approach to energy healing. Elders, shamans and others have taught me many things about aboriginal culture, ceremonies and way of life. All understand the importance of energy in life and health and how it connects everything to everything else.

We are now at a crossroads where this ancient wisdom is becoming more mainstream. Leaders in science are discovering that we are far more complex than biochemical machines. We are senders and receivers of energy as information, which influences our health far beyond our conscious awareness.

Our modern medical system uses a reductionist view to the body in wellness and illness. This means that our bodies are viewed as separate organs and systems with distinct functions. Wellness is the proper functioning of these separate systems; illness is when one or more parts are dysfunctional. The fundamental flaw of this viewpoint is that by dividing the body up, it misses the crucial governing system. Each of us is innately aware that

We are now at a crossroads where this ancient wisdom is becoming more mainstream. Leaders in science are discovering that we are far more complex than biochemical machines. We are senders and receivers of energy as information, which influences our health far beyond our conscious awareness.

emit information as energy. In this way, all particles are fundamentally connected to everything else. What we perceive as separateness in physical terms is illusory as we are all part of a field of information that is transmitted as energy. This is the basic premise of how distant energy healing works. Some people have the ability to see or perceive subtle energy, often referred to as "aura." The healer accesses this field of information in order to connect to another person and then deciphers it by putting the information into a form to which they can relate.

Healing is accomplished through various types of connections so a good place to start is to explain what I experience

It is impossible to separate our physical being from emotional and spiritual levels in energy medicine. Each of us is a complete being of unique experiences connected to a greater energy or our global energy consciousness. Our awareness of this and how we are all uniquely connected to each other is ultimately how energy is the defining system of life itself.

Intention requires synchronizing conscious and subconscious thought patterns in order to invoke change. Visualizations provide conscious focus and if they are fuelled by emotional impact they are more powerful and can be easily aligned with subconscious thought. Have the

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we are more than a collection of cells and biochemical reactions. Our energy system is the missing essence of our current medical model; that which makes us tick. It is the governing system within each of us and connects us to all other forms of life.

Real change can be made by examining and altering influences on our health, both external and internal. Externally, we are influenced by the attitudes and beliefs of our health care practitioner, media, school, work, friends and family.

Internally, we can adjust our limiting beliefs. Step out of self and listen carefully to what you are telling yourself. Are you your own worst critic? Do you judge yourself more harshly than you would

anyone else? Are you less forgiving of yourself than you would be of anyone else? Negative self-talk can be changed. We can all modify our perception of our environment.

Specific visualizations are helpful in focusing your immune system on the source of an issue. Understanding our energy is the meeting of ancient wisdom and modern science. Understand how you can most efficiently and effectively focus your intentions on healing. Throughout our lives, we are constantly balancing and rebalancing our state of well being. Each of us has direct control over this process through our thoughts and how we choose to perceive them. By using your focused

intentions, you can always improve your health or any aspect of your life by *tapping into the power of information*.

With some instruction, most people can more accurately see and feel this life force energy and use it in their own health and healing. Knowing of this energy system is an innate wisdom – one that we all have access to. Know what needs to change for your particular imbalance to be corrected efficiently. Know that metabolic processes are dynamic, allowing change to occur and then use your intentions to manifest this difference.

Self-healing knowledge resonates not only in your energetic field, but also in everyone's consciousness that you have

ever been connected to through thought, word or deed. As we access this ability, it is amplified through our inter-connectedness. Knowing that we all have an effect on each other leads to the acceptance of this greater global responsibility, or global consciousness. Energy systems govern all of life. Through helping ourselves, we ultimately help everyone in our global community.

Adam is a molecular biologist, internationally renowned energy healer, best-selling author and speaker. Adam presents the Intention Heals workshop in Vancouver, May 31.

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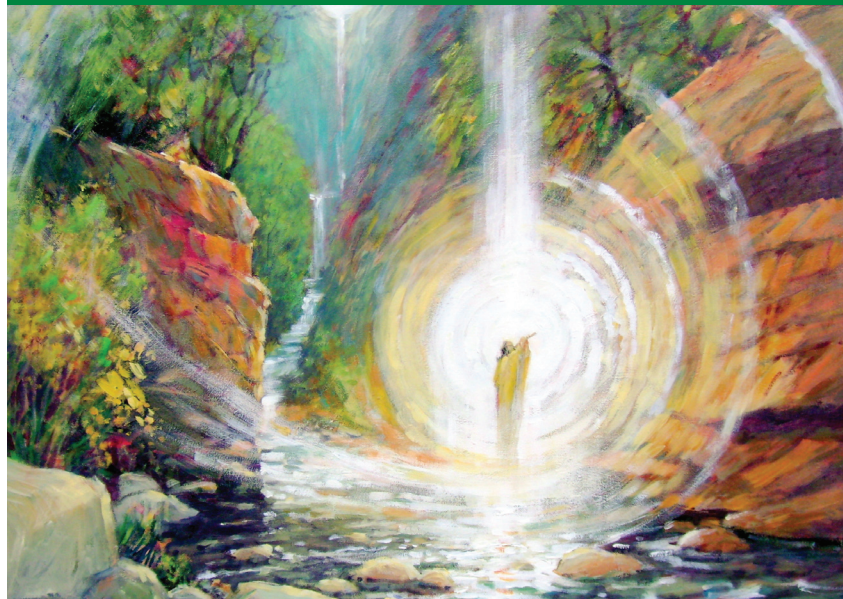
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Ten reasons for STV

EARTHFUTURE Guy Dauncey

On May 12, we are being invited to choose a new system of voting in BC. In place of the old "First Past the Post" system, we'll have a chance to choose a more democratic method. This is an enormous opportunity, but it is one we could easily lose if we are not well organized.

Under the present system, most BC governments are elected by a minority of the voters, with the unfortunate result that the majority of voters feel sulky, angry or irritated because their views are not being represented. This is not the way democracy is supposed to work.

On May 12, we can change this by voting for STV. Does STV stand for a "Sultry Transgendered Vagon" or a "Steaming Tantric Voluptuary?" No, it stands for the Single Transferable Vote and it can be explained in three easy points:

ONE: BC will have fewer ridings (20 instead of 79), but more MLAs per riding. Each riding will have between two and seven MLAs, for a total of 85 MLAs.

TWO: Instead of voting for one candidate, you rank the candidates in order of preference, placing "1" by your first choice, "2" by your second choice, etc.

THREE: The counting is done in rounds. After each round, one of two things happens: (1) if the leading candidate has more votes than are needed to win, the surplus votes are transferred to the candidate's supporters' second choices; (2) if not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and likewise, the votes are transferred to the second choices of those who voted for him/her. This continues until the clear winners emerge.

Here are 10 reasons STV makes sense:

1. The Citizens' Assembly that recommended STV was created by a unanimous vote of the BC Legislature. The Assembly was randomly selected, with one male and one female from each riding.

2. After studying all possible systems of voting and hearing hundreds of submissions from the public, 95 percent of its members recommended STV as the best for BC. STV is not complicated, as its opponents claim. You simply put a "1" by your first choice of candidate and "2", "3" or "4" (etc) by your follow-up choices.

3. Voting uses paper ballots and does not require a computer unless you want to tally the votes faster.

4. Under STV, few votes are wasted. Eighty percent of voters will see one of their top choices elected, compared to less than 50 percent in the current system.

5. Under STV, there is no need for "hold your nose" strategic voting, which

causes rifts and antagonisms between voters who support similar ideas.

6. STV will not produce more minority governments. It will often produce a single-party majority government and sometimes a coalition majority government. In Tasmania, in six of the last eight elections, STV produced a single-party majority government. Contrast this with Canada under the current system, where nine of the last 18 federal elections produced minority governments.

7. STV will create more respect between parties, as they may need to form a coalition government together. This will reduce the polarity and hostility that have been the curse of BC politics for years.

8. In most ridings, voters will elect



MLAs from two or more parties, giving you a choice of whom to speak to when you have a concern.

9. STV discourages negative campaigns because winning candidates need second and third-place support from voters whose first choice is a competing candidate. It rewards constructive behaviour.

10. STV does *not* encourage the election of fringe candidates, as its opponents claim. The preferential ballot weeds out extremists and ensures that the winning candidates have widely based support.

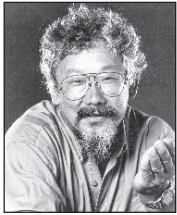
We need to mobilize as much support as possible as we approach May 12. Each side has been given \$500,000 with which to campaign and if I was opposing STV, I would claim, "It's complicated. It's going to elect minority governments and fringe candidates." None of this is true.

STV will give us more democratic, accountable governments. The system is used in Tasmania, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Malta, the Australian Senate and in local government elections in Scotland and Cambridge (MA). It would be great to have it here in BC.

To learn more, go to en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_transferable_vote and www.stv.ca where you can also volunteer.

Guy Dauncey is an author and speaker living in Victoria, BC.

See www.earthfuture.com and his personal blog at www.guydauncey.com



Forests part of climate puzzle

SCIENCE MATTERS David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

ENVIRONMENT

WE KNOW that global warming is a reality and that we humans are its primary cause. And we know that carbon dioxide emissions, mostly from burning fossil fuels, are a major contributor to global warming. But we still have much to learn about the Earth's mechanisms when it comes to regulating emissions and warming.

Forests – along with grasslands, soils and other ecosystems – are an important part of the equation, and a new report published in the journal *Nature* sheds a bit more light on their role. We've known for a long time that forests are important carbon sinks. That is, they absorb carbon from the atmosphere, thus preventing it from contributing to global warming.

But the *Nature* study shows that tropical forests absorb more carbon than we realized. Researchers from a number of institutions, including the University of Toronto, analyzed data from 79 intact forests in Africa from 1968 to 2007,

than it would have been if the forests were left intact.

We humans have upset the balance of nature in more ways than we understand. The scientists haven't figured out why the tropical trees are growing big enough to absorb more carbon than they release. One theory is that global warming and the extra carbon in the atmosphere are actually fertilizing the trees.

One thing we do know is that we cannot rely on tropical forests to prevent dangerous levels of climate change. But the amount of carbon they store is a compelling argument for protecting them: – they may at least provide a buffer while we work on other solutions, such as reducing our energy consumption and switching to renewable sources of energy.

Clearly, it's not the only reason to protect forests. The ability of forests to absorb carbon shows us that they have economic value beyond providing lumber. Forests are a source of medicine, food and clean drinking water and are habitat for over half of all land based plants and animals

Forests are a source of medicine, food and clean drinking water and are habitat for over half of all land based plants and animals on the planet.

along with similar data from 156 intact forests from 20 non-African countries. They concluded that tropical forests absorb about 4.8 billion tonnes of carbon a year, equivalent to about 18 percent of the carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere each year by burning fossil fuels. The world's oceans are the other major carbon sink, absorbing about half the human-produced carbon that doesn't end up in the atmosphere.

That doesn't mean we can count on the forests or the oceans to save us from our folly. To start, about 15 billion of the 32 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide that humans produce is not reabsorbed on land or sea and ends up in the atmosphere. And the carbon stored in forests can be released back into the atmosphere with natural disturbances, such as fire or insect outbreaks or if the forest is logged. This is because when trees are cut down, die and decay naturally or burn, some of the stored carbon is released back into the atmosphere. And many wood and pulp and paper products are discarded and destroyed in a much shorter time period than the life of an old-growth forest. This means that the carbon is released earlier

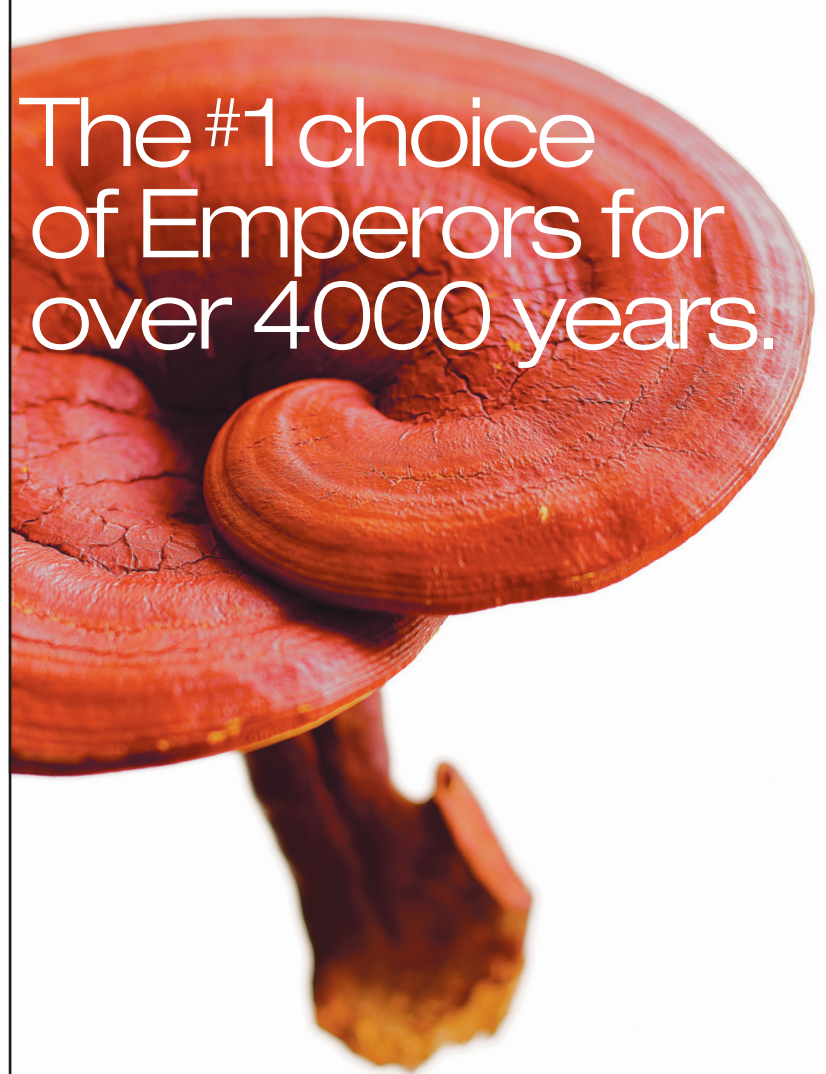
on the planet. Forests also provide spiritual, aesthetic and recreational opportunities for millions of people.

Forest degradation is also contributing to another ecological crisis, a biodiversity crisis on par with earlier mass extinctions. Scientists estimate that 16,000 species are now threatened with extinction, including 12 percent of birds, 23 percent of mammals and 32 percent of amphibians. Habitat destruction is partly responsible for this crisis and climate change is exacerbating it. And although most of our carbon emissions are from burning fossil fuels, one quarter is from deforestation.

This shows how everything in nature is interconnected and how our planet works to find equilibrium. We can't confront the problems we have created on a piecemeal basis. We must look at them together. Conserving the world's forests – which can include sustainable forestry practices – is one obvious place to start dealing with some of the most imminent crises.

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The rebellion of the tools

Techno-Darwinism, cyber addiction and natural play

by Geoff Olson

*I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electric outlets are. — A fourth grader in San Diego, quoted in *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder**

IN A *Punch* cartoon from 1959, two scientists in lab coats stand next to a huge computer, programmed to answer the question, “Is there a God?” One of them holds the computer’s printout response: “There is now.”

Things didn’t quite work out that way. Instead of cartoon monoliths demanding our worship, we found ourselves saddled with millions of little, attention-seeking consumer gadgets. Yet electronic networks also expanded to planetary scales with microwave relays and fibre optics. I guess you could say God moves in mysterious ways.

In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv recalls his son asking why it was so much more fun when his father was a kid. “You are always talking about your woods and tree houses, and how you used to ride that horse down to the swamp,” his son explained. Louv is wary of overly romanticizing his childhood, but he knew his son was on to something. “Americans around my age, baby boomers or older, enjoyed a kind of free, natural play that seems, in the age of kid pagers, instant messaging and Nintendo, like a quaint artifact.”

The author rhymes off the dreary health data that condemns the sedentary ways of electronically swaddled kids. This has accompanied the “criminalization of natural play,” through the overenthusiastic efforts to protect our children from any conceivable risks and dangers. Over the past two decades, tree houses, monkey bars and slides have been ripped from playgrounds across North America, for fear these municipal oases would become litigious scourges if little Johnny scraped a knee. And as kids’ playgrounds were child-proofed into absurdity, parents coached their kids to distrust strangers and to stay close at hand. The process was compounded by the marketing of video games, filling a void left by the outlaw of natural play.

The lives of middle-class children of western societies are increasingly structured and gadget mediated. “Helicopter parents” monitor their every move, scheduling them like little technocrats with playdates, excessive homework and electronic nannying. I recall an anecdote from a teacher in eastern Canada who assigned her primary school students to write about interacting with nature. A student sidled up to her desk and told her the assignment was too difficult, as she had “never climbed a tree before.”

It’s not that difficult to imagine a possible future where any tree climbing will be done by keyboards or consoles. With every gain in computer processing power, the virtual worlds of videogame shoot-em-ups and social networks like Second Life expand in bandwidth and eye-catching realism. Yet at the same time, pristine wilderness recedes that much further from personal and collective memory, along with kids’ access to its remaining patches.

Swiss architect Max Frisch defined technology as “the knack of so arranging the world that we don’t have to experience it.” By that measure, our culture has a real knack for digital dissociation. But as BC author



and education and addictions specialist Ross Laird notes, our species has existed in its present form for at least 40,000 years. Only in a blink of an eye have we been exposed to sedentary ways of life, mediated by technology. “We are animals. Our well-being depends upon bodily movement, expression, and integration,” he writes in a recent paper, *Adolescent Addictions: Creative Challenges and Opportunities*.

“This is what both current and ancestral research consistently demonstrates: our relationship with our own bodies is central to every aspect of our development. Modern challenges such as obesity, ADHD, cancer, diabetes, addictions of all kinds, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, trauma, and so on are consistently correlated with diet and exercise. In fact, healthy diet and exercise are the only two factors that are almost always linked to improvement across the domains of health and wellness... Insight alone cannot heal the fractured nervous system. Only movement and physical challenge can do that. With the average Canadian youth already seated in a chair and watching a screen for more than 40 hours per week, more chair-sitting seems like a poor idea.”

Personally, I can attest to the perils of techno-addiction. I’m a gadget freak who sets himself boundaries, like a boozier who knows how one little drink can lead to another. I don’t have a cell phone or a Blackberry. I don’t “tweet” or chat online and I rarely post on Internet forums. But I do have a website and an iPod, and wherever I go, Steve Jobs’ most impressive spawn goes. It’s great that I select my own personal soundtrack for a walk

in the woods or a hike up a local mountain, from Monteverdi to Mott the Hoople. (So there’s at least one form of technology around that doesn’t work against fitness.)

I’m not against technological advance, *per se*. We shape our tools, and in turn our tools shape us. That’s been true ever since the first anthropoid used a rock as a projectile. There is much to praise in the digital age, including one of the greatest inventions for free speech ever conceived: the Internet. Any discussion of the downside of the Internet has to entertain the idea of where we might be without it. The creative explosion of commentary on blogs and videos has challenged the mainstream manufacture of consent and put the so-called alternative press on notice. I don’t applaud the failure of newspapers, but I have even greater concern over the Internet being throttled by marketers and fear-mongering politicians.

With that big qualification aside, I’ve long noticed an interesting phenomenon among my adult friends and acquaintances. The happiest seem to be those who spend the least amount of time at their desktop computers and laptops. I can’t say if it’s a cause or an effect, and no doubt there’s all kinds of confounding variables, but I’ve noticed the connection.

So where is all this going with the next generation? As Ross Laird points out, the body is the vehicle of consciousness. Considering what kids are up against now, with the colonization of imagination by digital media, what does the acceleration of infotech bode for the future? If the technology is increasingly “wearable,” working into our clothing and our bodies, is that a solu-

tion to sedentary habits or a further concession to our own mechanization?

According to Wikipedia, the statistician I.J. Good was first to seriously suggest “that if machines could even slightly surpass human intellect, they could improve their own designs in ways unforeseen by their designers, and thus recursively augment themselves into far greater intelligences.” The highly regarded inventor and writer Ray Kurzweil believes we are only a few decades away from computers matching humans for natural intelligence. We are close to a “technological singularity,” he claims, where the human/machine interface will morph and blend in presently unimaginable ways. So far, Kurzweil’s record for predictions has been good. Through similar reasoning, citing the exponential growth of new technologies, he anticipated the PC explosion and the fall of the Soviet Union.

computers. As biological beings, our natural pace is closer to the phases of the Moon than the frequency of the motherboard. Yet as our devices get smarter, we struggle to keep up with them, like *Fantasia*’s Mickey Mouse and his magical, misbehaving brooms.

The perception that things are speeding up is about speedier information processing – not of our nervous systems, but our cell phones, pagers, PDAs, computers and electronic networks. Employers expect their employees to keep pace, even as more decision making is given over to the machines. Even the explosive growth of the recently trashed financial market, out of all proportion to the production-based economy, is largely owed to the dawn of electronic capital and its microsecond movement on exchanges.

There’s never been a civilization on Earth as wired as our own, but the inhabitants of previous empires

Mayan’s prophesied End Time (December 12, 2012) is the harbinger of vast, global transformation.

We may think our civilization has outgrown the habit of ritual sacrifice, but in the past few decades, we have sacrificed our leisure time on the altar of “faster, cheaper and more competitive.” Under this cyber-onslaught, pulling the plug occasionally isn’t just necessary for mental and physical health; it’s almost a subversive act.

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict spent years of field research trying to determine why some cultures are integrated and welcoming, while others are closed off and repressive. Convinced that cultures are “personality writ large,” she determined that it came down to a simple division between generosity and greed. It is that essential spark of selflessness, as a culturally nurtured value, that will likely determine if Darwin’s clever monkey learns to use his tools properly, or his tools learn to use him. Perhaps we will get the singularity we deserve.

If the future is shaping up to be global, command-and-control militarism, one part Orwell and two parts Huxley, our machines’ relationship with us will likely be parasitic. The environment will continue to degrade and children will be shadows of their true potential, their status to machines comparable to the unconscious human batteries in the film *The Matrix*.

But there is always the possibility of positive social transformation, ironically aided by a free and unregulated Internet (the copyleft and open-source movement may be the first signs of this transformation). If the future is driven by creativity and compassion, the machine/smart monkey relationship is more likely to be symbiotic. Decentralization of energy systems and political power will accompany the empowerment of the human spirit, in part through technical advancement of physical and mental capabilities. Children will have plenty of opportunities to clamber up trees, whether they are virtual beanstalks or real-world oaks.

I’m still optimistic enough to think this second option is not some Pollyannaish pipe dream, but the Cassandra in me suspects it will be by the skin of our teeth.

There’s also a third possibility for our species. We will continue to stumble along through serial social and ecological catastrophes, narrowly sidestepping extinction, accompanied by a bright and gleaming technology that is as morally ambiguous as its carbon-based creators. It will be a mixed bag of gains and losses, and long-winded essays like this one, debating the effects of technology, will continue into the indefinite future. The only difference is that the authors will include the occasional robot or neural network.

And on that note, I’m off for a walk in the woods. With the iPod, of course.

www.geoffolson.com

Over the past two decades, tree houses, monkey bars and slides have been ripped from playgrounds across North America... And as kids’ playgrounds were childproofed into absurdity, parents coached their kids to distrust strangers and to stay close at hand. The process was compounded by the marketing of video games, filling a void left by the outlaw of natural play.

The idea that events are speeding up isn’t just some abstract idea kicked around by the geek community. Nearly all of us feel the tectonic shift in the times. Late night radio broadcaster Art Bell pegged it “The Quickening,” imagining it as some massive, paranormal trend. I prefer Kurzweil’s more rigorous take, in which the acceleration of events is connected to the explosion of information technology. The inventor constructed a logarithmic graph out of 15 separate lifts of key paradigm shifts in human history. The information, from the American Museum of Natural History, *Encyclopedia Britannica* and other sources, demonstrates a 45-degree angle upwards. In a world of downward trends, this one is unequivocally upward and that worries some observers, though not the Libertarian minded Kurzweil, who thinks this trend offers an evolutionary upgrade to the human species.

The problem is that we are fundamentally different than our inventions. Human beings are part of a DNA-based biotech that is billions of years old. In spite of all our grey matter, our neural firing rates are no faster than those of field mice or tadpoles. Our brainwaves cycle at a leisurely 8 to 12 Hz range, in synchrony with the “Schuman resonance,” the Earth’s electromagnetic signature. This is far from the 1000000-plus Hz range of personal

thought, as we do, that they were on history’s cutting edge. By the 1920s, Germany could claim some of humanity’s greatest achievements in art, science and literature. The home to Beethoven, Goethe and Einstein soon became the playground for Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels. Yet the Nazis’ “Thousand Year Reich” lasted less than a decade.

Historians have found no demonstrable correlation between a culture’s technical sophistication and its lifespan. Yet across the ages, there were always artists and poets to warn against hubris. In the Maya creation epic *Popol Vuh*, there is a story called *The Rebellion of the Tools*, in which human beings are conquered by their own instruments:

“And all (those things) began to speak... ‘You ... shall feel our strength. We shall grind and tear your flesh to pieces,’ said their grinding stones... At the same time, their griddles and pots spoke: ‘Pain and suffering you have caused us... You burned us as if we felt no pain. Now you shall feel it, we shall burn you.’”

The Mayans, a violent society with a late-era habit of human sacrifice, never had a chance to learn any lessons from history. They disappeared entirely into the mists of time. Occasionally, they are resurrected as a cautionary tale or for the edification of those who believe the



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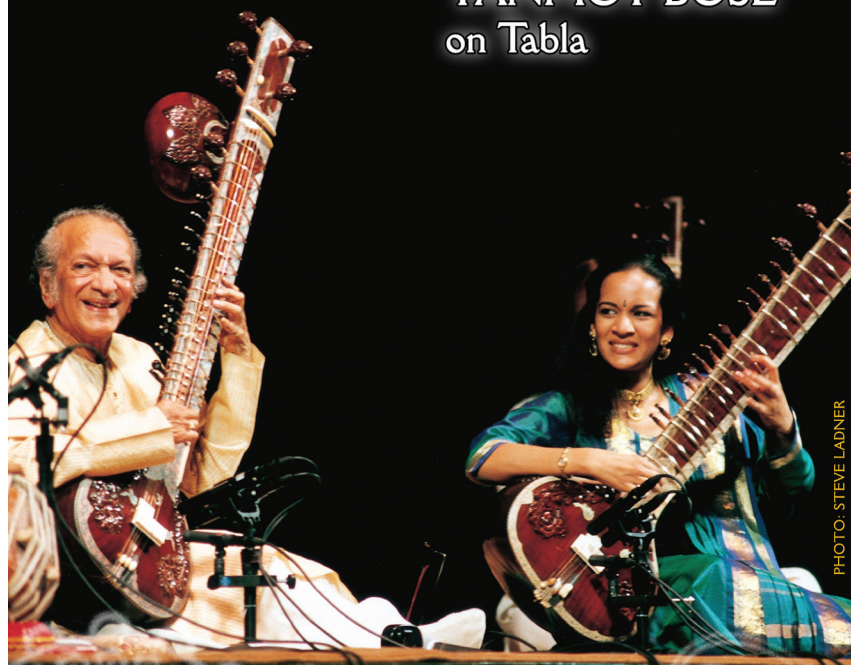


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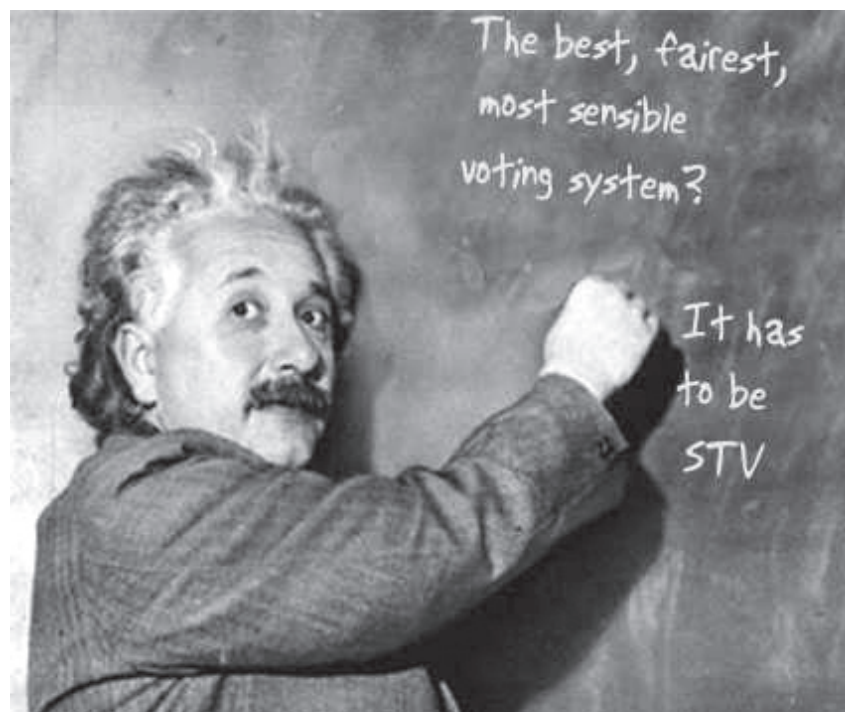
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Common Ground



You, me and STV

What people are saying about electoral reform



Let's make it fly

You have to ask yourself; why don't we adopt STV in BC? Are we a bunch of chickens or what? Are the politicians a little worried about losing control of the flock? Perhaps too few of us give much of a cluck about democracy? Don't be chicken; let's make this bird fly.

– Alan Cassels, drug policy researcher, University of Victoria, BC

– Alan Cassels, drug policy researcher, University of Victoria, BC

A fresh start for democracy

On May 12 in BC, we can have a fresh start for democracy. We have an historic opportunity. The UK has the same dysfunctional system as we do and they have been trying to change their electoral system since 1875. The



UK never even had a referendum! We can lead the way. We can bring in a new system in which citizens know their votes count, where politicians can be held to account and

where elections give genuine results. Voters will have more incentive to vote because every vote counts. We can bring in a system that creates a legislature that reflects the views of voters and the diversity of the electorate.

– Heather Dale, LL.B, MA, Vancouver regional organizer for the YES referendum campaign



Every vote should count

I have long been convinced of the need for proportional representation. Every vote should count and every voter's voice

should be reflected in the legislative body. Although I believe that a mixed member proportional format is the best system, I think that any electoral reform that introduces proportionality is a positive step. I look forward to discussing STV with all British Columbians in the weeks ahead.

– Don Davies, M.P. Vancouver Kingsway, www.dondavies.ca

Government for the people

Under BC-STV, each person gets to rank candidates in order of preference 1, 2, 3, etc. If your favourite candidate is eliminated, your vote is not wasted; it is simply transferred to your second choice, and so on. No need to vote strategically for the "lesser of two evils" as



we do currently. I truly believe that BC-STV is a tool to get our democracy to work better, to get governments more responsive to the people and to improve the "gov-

ernment of the people, by the people, for the people" as per Abraham Lincoln's famous saying.

– Frédéric Van Caenegem, SFU student, Centre for Sustainable Community Development

Closer to what voters want

BC-STV will improve our democracy. It will give us a legislature which is what we want and voted for. It gives voters the power to choose the MLAs they want for their preferred party. It moves power from the party leaders down to the MLAs and moves power down from the MLAs to the voters. It gives women and popular independent candidates more opportunity to get elected. BC-STV will often lead to coalition governments which have to work on a consensus. They will have policies much closer to what the voters want, and voters will be more satisfied because they will see the system as being fair. FPTP is an unfair system which does none of these things.

David Huntley, Professor Emeritus, Department of Physics, Simon Fraser University

.....
You have to ask yourself; why don't we adopt STV in BC?
Are we a bunch of chickens or what? Are the politicians a little worried about losing control of the flock?

Here's our chance BC!

I remember the night of our last federal election. I scurried down to the local pub to get the election results in the warm buzz of dedicated neighbours. What a shock to find only 58 percent of Canadians had voted versus 30 years earlier in 1978 when close to 80 percent had! What's up with that? Clearly, two reasons: a rising disillusionment with politicians and secondly, an antiquated voting "First Past the Post" system that has left many Canadians asking, "What's the point?" Finally, we can do something about the second. Here's our chance BC to make some good history. Okay everybody; let's do the referendum!

— *Rev. Mahara Brenna, speaker, mediator, community builder, Vancouver*



the same as lower doses. For example, a month's worth of 20 mg tablets of the statin Lipitor costs about \$67 and the 40mg tablet costs about \$72. Doctors who think the patient needs 20mg could prescribe the larger 40mg tablet and ask them to split it, taking half a pill each day. This one small action will save the patient almost \$400 off their annual drug bill.

So go ahead and pick up a pill splitter for less than five dollars at a pharmacy and proceed to get twice the medication for the same price. Pill splitting is not appropriate for every person or every type of medication, but in the

case of statins, splitting the pills is safe and economical.

A study published last summer showed that patients in BC are already cutting their own drug costs by splitting their statins. Even without widespread promotion of the practice, it is estimated that about five percent of BC's statin users were splitting their pills, saving BC consumers (and private health plans and governments) about \$2.3 million per year. Every year, British Columbians consume more than \$140 million worth of cholesterol-lowering statins, an amount that has been growing steadily throughout the past decade.

If everyone split their pills, we'd save an easy \$50 million per year.

Not bad. One drug class. One intervention. Tons of money saved.

Will this recession call upon more such ingenuity? I hope so. If it helps us put on our thinking caps and remove the waste from our prescription drug bill, it may well pay off in ways that allow us to reinvest those savings into things that count.

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and author of The ABCs of Disease Mongering: An Epidemic in 26 Letters.

Reclaim Your Power

Vote YES to BC-STV on May 12



The rules of the democracy should be designed by the people they serve, not by the power brokers who may wish that the democracy worked in their interests.

Premier Gordon Campbell
Hansard, April 30, 2003



In 2005, 58% of voters supported the recommendation of the Citizen's Assembly to change our voting system to BC-STV. This time, we need to say YES even LOUDER.

Jane Sterk
Green Party of BC



We believe that the current single-member plurality voting system is severely flawed and must be replaced by a new, fair, and workable system for electing MLAs.

Carol James NDP
to Citizen's Assembly on June 17, 2004

On May 12, 2009, British Columbians will have a chance to make a history by voting **YES** to a proportional voting system known as the BC Single Transferable Vote, **BC-STV**, which was nearly unanimously recommended by the BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

"Nearly 58 per cent of all citizens who cast a ballot in the recent referendum [2005] on electoral reform supported the proposed STV electoral system. A solid majority supported STV in all but two of BC's 79 constituencies. The Citizens' Assembly . . . citizen-centered, dedicated, and independent . . . concluded that our current system of electing MLAs was lacking and that a better system could be found in the Single Transferable Vote model.

— *Iona Campagnolo, Lieutenant Governor of BC, Throne Speech, September 12, 2005*



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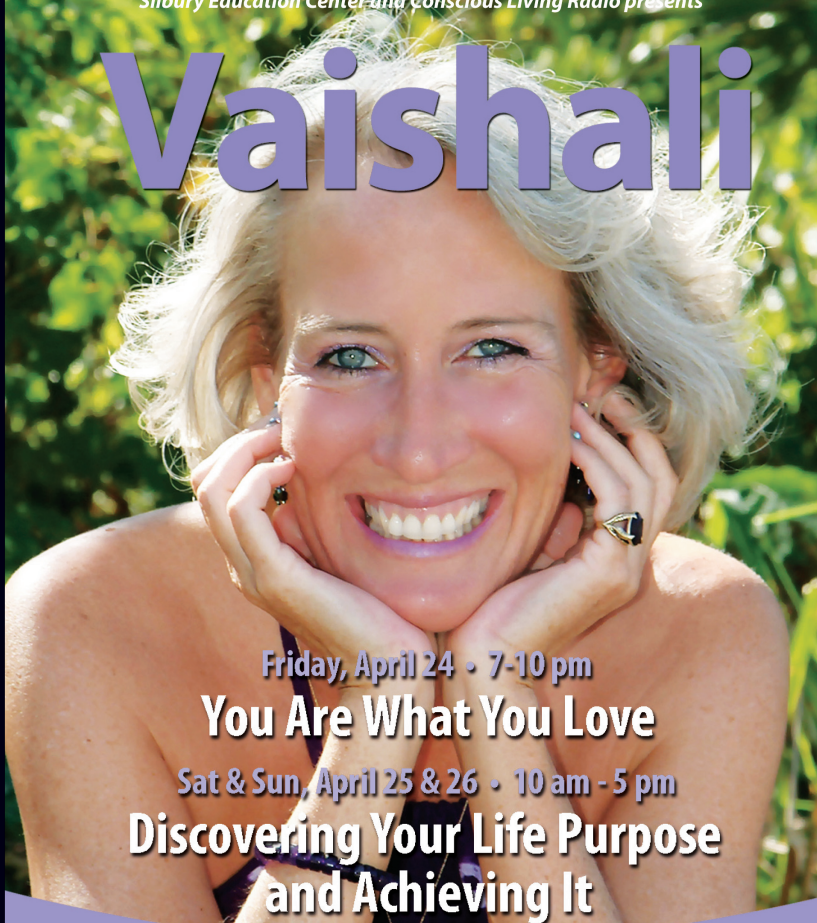
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Democracy is evolving

Democracy is an ideal, a fragile state that requires our ongoing attention in order to be preserved. It is a gift passed to us by our parents and grandparents, paid for by their blood and tears. Democracy has finally arrived after millennia of serfdom, dictatorship and slavery. Finally, we hold the privilege of voting for someone to represent us in government. Never before have we enjoyed this freedom. By voting, we demonstrate our willingness to uphold democracy. This, however, is only a beginning. Democracy has been an unfolding process conditioned and stabilized by history and tradition, but nevertheless aided and developed over time – the most recent advances, of course, being the extension of suffrage to women and the lower classes and all races.

Democracy is now ready for the next evolutionary stage, a state that has to do with how our votes are counted. Under our present voting rules, only votes for the winning candidate have the power to elect anyone. Second and third place finishers split up the remainder of the vote, thus making it very difficult to win a seat. This is a distortion created by the simple mechanics of the system and limits the competition in the riding. This condition limits the scope of political debate and erodes public support for democracy.

On election day, consider your ballot carefully. The decision you make will be your only input into the governance for the next four years. You get to place an X next to one of four or five candidates and that is your only option. If the candidate of your choice does not win, your vote does not provide you with representation in government. Now consider another kind of ballot. On this ballot, you may choose from one to nine or 10 candidates. There may be more than one candidate from each of the larger parties. You get to rank your choices, marking your first choice 1, one your sec-

ond choice 2, and so on until you have ranked as many candidates as you wish, or all of them.

Under these new rules, voters will have far more influence. Representatives owe most of their allegiance to the voters back home in their district and less allegiance to the party, which, at present, determines how they will vote. Under this new system, a new political caucus may arise within the district with support from across party lines. With the proposed closing of a hospital, for instance, this new set of voting rules promises a fairer outcome, more consensual politics and a more stable government. The large-scale swings in policy that happen now when governments change will be no more; instead, policy will evolve more slowly and will be capable of responding to very long-term issues like global warming and social systems. Our present system is entrenched in a bipolar, left/right, conflict-based model, which cannot accommodate the political, social and cultural diversity of modern society. It is a 19th century artifact that has its roots in the earliest beginnings of democracy.

On May 12, a referendum on the provincial election ballot will ask you to choose between the present "First Past the Post" electoral system and a new system called BC-STV or the Single Transferable Vote. BC-STV is the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, a group of 160 of your peers, who were selected at random from the list of voters. After extensive study and consultation with the public, the Citizens' Assembly designed and built a new voting system that belongs to the citizens of BC. This system is our system. On May 12, vote yes for BC-STV. It's your system bought and paid for by you. It is your right, so take it. For more information on BC-STV or to volunteer, visit www.bc-stv.ca

— Tim Jones

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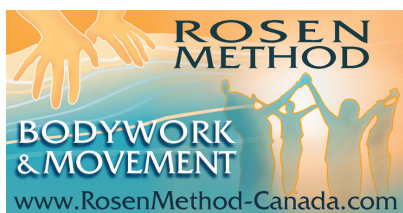
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*A society grows great when old men plant trees in
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– Greek proverb

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I happen to feel that the degree of a person's intelligence is directly reflected by the number of conflicting attitudes she can bring to bear on the same topic.

— Lisa Alther

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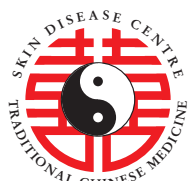
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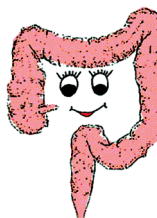
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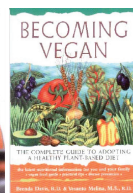
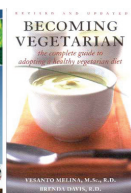
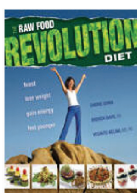
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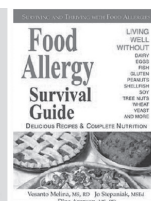
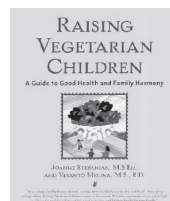
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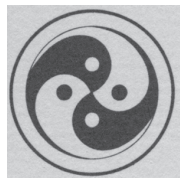
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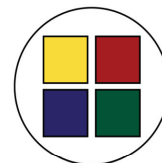
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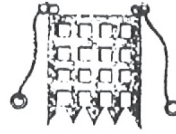
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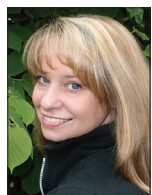
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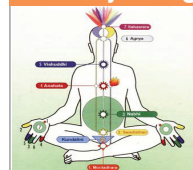
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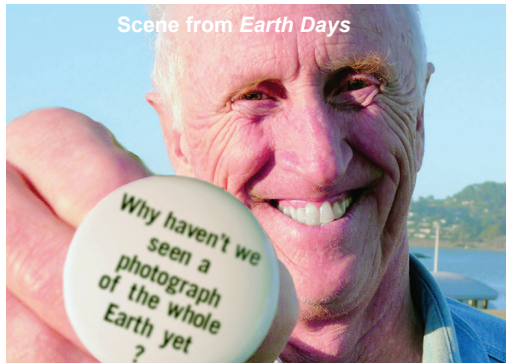


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Scene from *Earth Days*



Framing the Earth

FILMS WORTH WATCHING Robert Alstead

Earth Days is a well-crafted documentary that, through interviews with key participants in the green movement, taps a rich vein of optimism and hope while acknowledging that an awful lot of damage has been inflicted on our fragile planet. (www.earthdaysmovie.com)

The story of Earth Day and the development of the environmental movement are closely intertwined: writer-director Robert Stone's enjoyable film suggests that you can pinpoint the start of the modern environmental movement to the first Earth Day in 1970. People like Rachel Carson, with her pesticides exposé *Silent Spring* published in 1962, created a new sensitivity toward the environment, but it wasn't until millions took to the streets across the US on that first Earth Day that people realized they were linked by a common concern. A political force had

been born. Nixon – not generally remembered for his green credentials – created the Environmental Protection Agency to monitor pollutants in the same year.

Stone's choice of nine interviewees reflects his interest in the political development of environmentalism over the years in the US with inside stories from original Earth Day organizer Denis Hayes, early environmental author and former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and eco-conscious Republican congressman Pete McCloskey. There's a sense of achievement mixed with amusement and regret, but perhaps the most poignant moments are when the interviewees talk about their memories of life before land started being gobbled up by post-war development.

Stone reels off copious amounts of archive footage, particularly of utopian

fifties' visions of the future, to put us in the right mindset and contrasts it effectively with the contrarian, ecological warnings of authors Paul Ehrlich and Dennis Meadows and *Earth Times* editor Stephanie Mills, who chose not to have a child for environmental reasons. They make a good point that their predictions of ecological collapse due to exponential population growth were not necessarily wrong; we just put them off for a while.

The BBC wildlife series *Earth* has been re-edited into a feature length movie for theatrical release. Expect nothing short of stunning imagery of the natural world, although sanitized of its bloodier aspects for family viewing. *Earth* comes out on, you guessed it, Earth Day.

Robert Alstead maintains a blog at 2020Vancouver.com.

APRIL 22 is Earth Day, and has been since 1970, when a bunch of Harvard graduates organized a grass roots teach-in on the environment.

The history of Earth Day is the subject of *Earth Days*, the closing film at the second Projecting Change Film Festival (www.projectingchange.ca). The film fest, which saw 2,200 attendees last year, could itself easily be titled "Earth Days" with its strong environmental focus. (The film festival runs April 2-5 at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, 2110 Burrard Street.)



Let's re-imagine journalism

INDEPENDENT MEDIA Steve Anderson

CULTURE

The Conservatives appear determined to either commercialize or cut financial support for the CBC and other public broadcasters. As a pillar of our media system, the CBC needs stability, not more cuts and uncertainty.

SINCE MY last column, in which I wrote about the decline of journalism, the bleeding of jobs and the threat of local news outlets going “black” continue. Along with a slew of recent layoffs, Canwest is attempting to sell off parts of its media empire. Journalists have now become active in reporting the slaughtering of the media industry, resulting in what The Tyee describes as a “collective auto-obituary.”

At this critical time, when the new media environment is being molded and traditional journalism is in a state of decline, creative approaches to journalism are urgently needed. If big business-financed journalism is failing, what alternatives do we have?

Public support

The Conservatives appear determined to either commercialize or cut financial support for the CBC and other public broadcasters. As a pillar of our media system, the CBC needs stability, not more cuts and uncertainty. It requires continued, and I would suggest, increased financial support from the public.

In addition, funds such as the Canadian Magazine Fund and Telefilm could

support newsgathering and reporting and add to the range of eligible projects to include online, independent journalism. This could be combined with a new Internet Broadcast Fund, supported by a telecom levy, something I called for in my February column.

In conjunction with other support mechanisms, we could also utilize the Local Programming Improvement Fund (LPIF). Announced last year by the CRTC, the LPIF will be supported by a percentage of cable and satellite revenues and is expected to amount to \$60 million in the first year.

Regardless of the sources of financial support, it is essential that all available funds be allocated directly to media makers and media outlets for news production – not handed over to big media with no strings attached.

Community supported journalism?

Foundations, labour groups, NGOs and individuals can also play a role in renewing journalism through the financing of journalism public trusts or specific charitable journalism funds that could support innovative news projects. Several journalism experiments are already being

supported by these sources.

The independent, non-profit online news organization, *Rabble.ca*, for example, combines support from individuals and revenues from advertising with funds provided by a group of “sustaining partners,” comprised of NGOs, unions and foundations. *The Tyee* is funded through a similar mix of sources and both *This Magazine* and *The Walrus* are published by charitable foundations. We should be challenging civil society organizations to ramp up their support for independent public service journalism.

One way that civil society organizations can help fill the current void in journalism is to support several current initiatives where journalists themselves are taking over media production. *The Dominion* newspaper, for example, is attempting to form a media cooperative that would produce a national newspaper. Journalists are also taking more immediate action. When the workers at the profitable *Journal de Montréal* were locked out this past January, they almost immediately launched their own news website called *Rue Frontenac*. These ground-up initiatives suggest that journalists can ditch those old big media papers in favour

of new worker-run outlets.

At CHCH, the local television station in Hamilton, Ontario, employees are attempting to buy the station and run it similar to a hospital – the station would be owned by the community and governed by a board of directors made up of community leaders. The station’s owner, Canwest, plans to sell or shut down the station due to its poor financial situation. CHCH is one of many local Canwest and CTV television stations the media giants are poised to unload.

The CHCH campaign could ignite similar initiatives in cities and towns across the country. These projects need to have the financial freedom to innovate and the opportunity to thrive. The precarious state of local TV and journalism, as a whole, should be seen as an historic opportunity to re-imagine what journalism in the 21st century should look like.

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for the Campaign for Democratic Media and has written for The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times and Adbusters. Reach him at:

*steve@democraticmedia.ca
www.SteveOnTwitter.com*



Perspectives

THIRTY SOMETHING Ishi Dinim

Amazingly, one little proactive step can shift a lot of stagnation into momentum. I’ve been so overwhelmed by all of the stuff I have to do that I wasn’t getting any of it done.

MY STORY isn’t finished yet. Sometimes, I get so caught up in it that I find it hard to see out of it, to separate myself from watching the ink dry. Today, I crawled up on a ladder and cleaned my windows from the outside for the first time in several years. I had been living with filthy dirt between the world and me and it was obvious that no one else was going to do anything about it.

People are often “in their heads” way too much of the time. I’m one of those people. Regardless of what rattles around my brain about who should do what, just the feeling of having it done is so satisfying that it may be the spark I’ve been looking for. Amazingly, one little proactive step can shift a lot of stagnation into momentum. I’ve been so overwhelmed by all of the stuff I have to do that I wasn’t getting any of it done. Even as it piled up around me, I tried to look past

it; it seemed like there was too much to deal with: bills, mess, career, loose ends, relationships...

What makes us shift into new states of mind? Is it a eureka moment like the light switching on or the weight of the world that breaks the camel’s back? Maybe it’s both or just whatever we’re ready for when it happens. Either way, I think I’m done flirting with depression for this year. Another winter has gone by and spring and summer beckon.

A friend recently told me something really insightful: “You know that chocolate bar called *Excellence*? Well, life is kinda like that. There is no perfect; even that bar is only 85 percent cocoa.”

I’m going to suspend the idea that something is wrong with me and just hope that I’m good enough. I’m ready to flail, stumble and be wrong. The only way I could really fail at this point would be by not trying at all. Who knows where I’ll

be and what I’ll be doing in six months? I’ll look back on my funk and thank it for being part of the process towards fulfillment.

Quotes:

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. – Carl Gustav Jung

The dust of many crumbled cities settles over us like a forgetful doze, but we are older than those cities. We began as a mineral. We emerged into plant life and into the animal state, and then into being human, and always we have forgotten our former states, except in early spring when we slightly recall being green again. That’s how a young person turns toward a teacher. That’s how a baby leans toward the breast, without knowing the secret of its desire, yet turning instinc-

tively. Humankind is being led along an evolving course, through this migration of intelligences, and though we seem to be sleeping, there is an inner wakefulness that directs the dream and that will eventually startle us back to the truth of who we are. – Rumi

Must-see films and series:

*Blindness
Milk
Son of Rambow
Generation Kill
Breaking Bad*

Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti and ponders many things. Currently, he is doing what he can for himself and the planet. contactishi@yahoo.ca

Waiting to hear echoes back...

Datebook

Earth Day - April 22
www.earthday.ca

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May 2 & 3

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APR 9

Meditation for Planetary Peace on the Full Moon: April 9 at 7:30pm, 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver.
www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver.htm

Why Spiritual Healing is Crucial. Move beyond physical care to spiritual restoration and wellbeing. Speaker: Ron Ballard CSB. See in Resource Directory under Health & Healing. Plaza 500 Hotel, April 9 at 7:30pm, 500 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver.

APR 10-13

Easter Celebration Retreat: Connect to the stillness and peace of this beautiful time of year during our silent retreat at the Self Realization Meditation Healing Centre, Sunshine Coast. www.selfrealizationcentre.ca
1-604-740-0898.

APR 11

Shamanic Drumming & Dreaming Circle: Sat. 7-10pm. Insight/healing from your Nature Spirit Animal Totem guardians. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Society, 1254, W. 7th. Donation. Earthsong Healing Circles. 604.418.9636.
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APR 17

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APR 18

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APR 19

Nature of Mind; Tape 1 of Krishnamurti - philosopher, Bohm-physicist, Hildre-psychoanalyst, Sheldrake - biologist. 4PM; Dialogue: 15-7:15PM. Planetarium. Donation. Information: 604-734-7774.

APR 24-26

Vaishali: Apr 24 - You Are What You Love, 7-10pm. Apr. 25-26 - Discovering Your Life Purpose, 10-5pm. All events at 1125 Howe St., Ste. 280. Tickets: www.consciousradio.org or Banyen Books, 604-737-8858. See display ad.

APR 25

Don Miguel Ruiz with son Don Jose Ruiz: Unity of Vancouver, 5840 Oak St., 7pm. Tickets \$50 through www.brownpapertickets.ca or Banyen Books, 604-737-8858. See display ad.

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MAY 8-9

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MAY 8-10

Basic ThetaHealing Certification Workshop in Vancouver with Loretta Mohl. Information: www.CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com Call: 780-910-5052 Or email Loretta@CanadianCollegeofHealingArts.com

MAY 9

VICTORIA – Relax & Renew with Dru Yoga, Shambhala Meditation Ctr, #1-2033 Belmont Ave, 1 - 4 pm - \$55 250-896-9547 or druevents@shaw.ca

MAY 16

Ravi Shankar & Anoushka Shankar: Orpheum Theatre, Vancouver, 8pm. Tickets: www.ticketmaster.ca or 604-280-4444. See display ad.

MAY 22-24

10th Annual Yoga Outreach Fundraising Retreat: Squamish. 23 great local yoga teachers offer an amazing variety of classes. \$345 (all inclusive) www.yogaoutreach.com

MAY 29-31

Spirit Heals Integrative Medicine Conference: An exploration of spirituality in health and Healing. Victoria, BC. Info & registration: www.spiritheals.ca See display ad.

MAY 31

Adam Dreamhealer workshop: Experience self-empowerment as Adam, molecular Biologist, international best-selling author, speaker & energy healer orchestrates 2 unique group healings. All registration online at www.dreamhealer.com (MAY 3: Toronto JUN 28: Edmonton)

MAY 31-JUN 13

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Past Life Healings By Appointment
Please contact Janet Mierau
at 604.921.6981 or jmierau@telus.net

Classifieds

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic 6 - 10pm One hour sessions \$18. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818 www.pacificreflexology.com

WEDNESDAYS

Pressure Proof Your Life Become Resilient to Stress: Learn to program your mind & body for success: Health - Weight - Relationships - Career - Finances - Enjoyment of life! Wednesdays: April 29, May 6, 13 & 20, 7-9pm, \$199 (Includes CD) Limited Seating (Register early) 604.990.1584 www.EhrlichAndAssociates.com

Dru Yoga classes, April 1, 8, 15, 22, May 6, East Side Yoga Studio, 1707 Grant St. @ Commercial 7:15pm - 8:45pm. 604-936-3255. druvents@shaw.ca

Hawaiian Medicine Circle 7pm Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks. \$10 donation. At Hale Ola, 1215 Madison Avenue, Burnaby. 604-431-7474 Call Kamu Kaimana

FRIDAYS

"Destiny Dialogues" Free Talks First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. 7-9pm. 604-317-1613.

Just Dance! Three Fridays a month. Alcohol & smoke-free. 9pm, 2114 W. 4th Ave. @ Arbutus. \$10/5. www.justdance.ca.

ONGOING

Free Meditation Workshop: Experience Kundalini awakening through Sahaja Yoga, as taught by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi & enjoy your Powers at our Weekly classes, always free and open to all. 604-597-8440, www.sahajayoga.org.

Live Music at Bito's Greek Restaurant, 6591 Fraser St. (at 50th). Friday and Saturday evenings. Check out our daily specials.. 604-327-7020

Healing Tea Parties. Gather some friends and join Pamela Patterson in a fun relaxed atmosphere to learn about and experience Healing. Pam has been a Healer and a Yoga Teacher for over 30 years. \$25, 604-731-4316.

Littlehug Divination Circles. Be empowered! Your place, your friends, your answers to questions about wealth, work, wellness...Create your own circle. Realize your full human potential with Kathie, 30 years experience. 604.324.7053.

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EDUCATION

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FLOATATION TANK

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SKIN DISEASE TREATMENT

DR. ANDY ZHOU, PHD, expert diagnosis and treatment, 604-736-6060, drandyzhou@gmail.com, www.TCMdermatologist.com (See ad in Resource Directory, Health & Healing.)

SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE SERVICE

THE SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE SERVICE provides free support, information and therapist referrals for people experiencing psychospiritual challenges, spiritual awakening and non-ordinary or transformative states of consciousness. www.spiritualemergence.net, 604-533-3545.

STORIES WANTED

SECOND WIND STORIES is inviting submissions for a proposed anthology about true-life love & success stories by 40-somethings. Visit www.secondwindstories.com

TAROT

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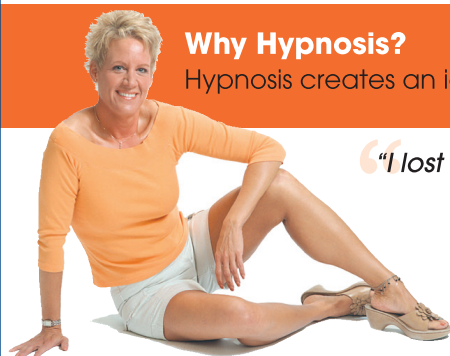
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On Track Zodiac

APRIL 2009 Adrien Dilon



ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

With your ruling planet, Mars, in incompatible waters, you may find yourself still shaking off some lethargy. Near the end of the month, you will feel the floodgates blast open with your newfound exhilaration and hope. You've simmered over plans and it's soon time to act. A new day is dawning and the Sun shines on your day of birth.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

Communication is key and you have all the tools you need to effect lasting changes in the work area as well as within your friendships. If the response you desire is one of clarity and understanding, it stands to reason that you must communicate precisely what you want.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

Two wills, two bodies, two directions perhaps colliding and coming up with a sense of duplicity of intent. Perhaps you feel at your wits end about deciding upon a direction and path. When in doubt, do nothing – "nothing" as a meditation, that is – then all paths clear.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

You simply must get that song out that stirs in your heart. To lament may be poetic, but to create music, poetry or art about what you yearn for will elevate your moods. You will be astounded by the precision that is your creativity. Keep the flow moving.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

If you can imagine everything that comes your way as a bonus with a hidden reward, fantasy can be used to create a way through some baffling challenges. What seems like an uphill battle will truly give meaning to perceived failure, as any downturn is a license for opportunity.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

You use your mental faculties to process and recharge your awareness, but others may want to tell you otherwise. You could heed the words from The Pointer Sisters' song about taking other people's advice: "Listen to it, sort through it, contemplate it, but don't take it."



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

If something feels antiquated to you, whether it is your attire, outdated friendships or lack thereof, send those bygone modes into oblivion. It is high time you listened to your own self-governing orders, as you, yourself, are the commander and chief.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

You may want to apologize to yourself in the mirror, as there could be some self-conflict or eruptions of residual resentment. Feelings of confusion or being ill at ease may come and go; it's important to keep yourself in line with yourself, for yourself and by yourself. Let there be peace within.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You are riding high lately and along with that you feel you only want people of good quality around you – those who exemplify your notion of excellence of character and who perhaps share similar goals. Family also plays a part in promoting healthy living and your concern with it.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

Patience will be the needle in the haystack that you can't seem to find. You will go from being tested to walking away free and clear from any obligation you felt wasn't yours to begin with. Courage will be needed whilst you hold your tongue. Soon enough, you will emerge as a shining example.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

You aren't interested in how rich you can get when choosing a career path. You might only get excited about stimulating your career with something joyful and completely different. "Been there, done that" is a phrase that has moved out of your mind. You are clearer about what you want and how to find it. Games are fun.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

You are ready to step up onto your toes and look over that wall you felt was too daunting to climb over. With courage in your heart and the added thrill of what's around the bend, you can explore fearlessly now. The fresh air on your face brings out your cheery nature and life seems salubrious.

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 34 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dilon@gmail.com.

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